THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) The staff posted at Jind Loco Shed is considered adequate as per yardstick laid down.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Steam engines will be replaced with diesels progressively as a part of Railway's policy.

(d) 12 diesels will be required to close Jind Shed at a cost of about Rs. 121 lakhs each. Jind Shed is expected to be closed in the later half of Ninth Plan.

(e) As and when the regular staff in this Loco Shed become surplus their redeployment in other jobs will be considered by the Railway Administration.

Opening of New Vayudoot Offices

2765. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in some places where Indian Airlines had withdrawn from operation are still continuing their booking offices and these offices are not booking Vayudoot tickets; and

(b) if so, what is the justification for continuing these offices; and by when Vayudoot is likely to open their booking offices or whether they propose to hand over this job to the private agencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) and (b) Indian Airlines has temporarily suspended its operations to/from Belgaum, Nasik, Tirupati and Vijayawada. However, Indian Airlines continues to maintain offline booking offices at these stations as these offices generate significant sales and revenue from passenger traffic originating from these cities and availing of Indian Airlines' services from the nearby stations. Indian Airlines issues tickets on Vayudoot sectors where the journey is in conjunction with an Indian Airlines sector.

In order to reduce expenditure on over-heads, Vayudoot does not open its own offices at stations where the traffic revenue does not justify a fullfledged Vayudoot office. At such stations Vayudoot appoints handling and ticketing agents. Vayudoot has already appointed such agents at these four stations.

Damage to National Highways due to Floods

2765. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the estimated damage to the National Higways due to the recent floods in various States; and

(b) what steps are being taken by Govt. and how much amount has been allotted to each State to carry out repairs of the National Highways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Financial Assistance to Improve Orissa State Road Transport Corporation

2766. SHRI BAIKUNTHA NATH SAHU: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Orissa have requested his Ministry to provide Central assistance to improve the financial condition of Orissa State Road Transport Corporation;